

United States Department of State

U.S. Embassy Tunisia

Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO): Promoting sustainable economic growth by supporting job creation efforts and helping increase access to financing and credits

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE



MIDDLE EAST PARTNERSHIP INITIATIVE (MEPI) LOCAL GRANTS PROGRAM

Key Information:

Application Deadline:	23:59:59 (Tunis Time) on February 29, 2016
Federal Agency Contact	MEPITunis@state.gov 216-71-107-323 216-71-107-003
Date Opened	February 01, 2016

A. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The U.S. Embassy announces a new Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) to support Tunisia's economic growth through direct support to Tunisian civil society or non-governmental organizations.

This NOFO is consistent with U.S. Department of State principles enshrined in the Middle East Partnership Initiative (MEPI) to foster prosperous societies where education, specialized skill training, and an environment conducive to business development inspire innovation and create the foundation for long-term economic growth and an internationally competitive private sector.

The U.S. Embassy invites Tunisian civil society organizations or non-governmental organizations to submit creative and detailed proposals, which address an array of needs outlined below.

Purpose of the Award:

Applications should work toward at least one of the following objectives:

1. Increase access to financing and credit for all Tunisians throughout the country to spur enterprise growth, job creation, and economic development in marginalized regions. Proposals should not include providing micro-credit awards.
2. Develop the Tunisian workforce's job skills, especially those of youth, to enable jobseekers to compete in today's global marketplace to reduce unemployment.
3. Improve customer service skills of candidates seeking employment in Tunisia's important service sectors, such as tourism, food and beverage, and communications.

B. FEDERAL AWARD INFORMATION

Funding Instrument Type: Grant

Size of Awards: Awards typically range from \$50,000 to \$150,000.

Date Opened: February 01, 2016

Date Closed: February 29, 2016

C. ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

C.1 Eligible Applicants

Eligible applicants include local organizations of civil society, non-profit organizations, community groups, non-governmental organizations, professional associations, private sector organizations, and universities based in Tunisia. The U.S. Embassy's preference is to work with non-profit entities; however, there may be occasions when a for-profit entity is best suited. This NOFO can fund local branches of foreign organizations but only if the local branch is legally organized under Tunisia laws and the local branch also meets the registration requirements to obtain its own DUNS number. The local branch must also demonstrate that its local Board of Directors is comprised of more than 50% of local Board members and the local organization conducts most budgeting and M&E functions locally and not via the main office.

For-profit entities should be aware that its application may be subject to additional review following the panel selection process and that the Department of State generally prohibits profit under its assistance awards to for-profit or commercial organizations. Profit is defined as any amount in excess of allowable direct and indirect costs. The allowability of costs incurred by commercial organizations is determined in accordance with the provisions of the Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR) at 48 CFR 30, Cost Accounting Standards Administration, and 48 CFR 31 Contract Cost Principles and Procedures. Project income earned by the recipient must be deducted from the total project allowable cost in determining the net allowable costs on which the federal share of costs is based.

The U.S. Embassy is committed to an anti-discrimination policy in all of its projects and activities. The U.S. Embassy welcomes proposals irrespective of the applicant's race, ethnicity, color, creed, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, or disability. We invite applications from organizations working with minority, disenfranchised, and lesser-served communities, including women and youth. The U.S. Embassy is also interested in proposals that involve the participation of persons with disabilities.

C.2 Cost Sharing or Matching

Providing cost sharing, matching, or cost participation is not an eligibility requirement for this NOFO.

Number of Applications: Applicants may not submit more than one proposal per organization.

D. APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION

D.1 Address to Request Application Package

Applicants can find application forms on <http://tunisia.usembassy.gov/> and <http://mepi.state.gov/mepi/english-mepi/funding-opportunities/apply-for-a-grant/open-funding-opportunities.html> . Documents 5 and 6 below must be in Microsoft Word.

D.2 Content and Form of Application Submission

- **How to Apply:** Applicants interested in MEPI Local Grants funding must complete and submit the following documents and either send them via email to MEPITunis@state.gov or apply via www.grants.gov.
- 1. Completed and signed Application for Federal Assistance Form (SF-424) to provide basic information about your organization, the proposed project, the funding amount requested, and information about the announcement to which you are applying.
- 2. Project Narrative to provide detailed information about your proposed project
- 3. Budget Narrative to provide a detailed explanation of the costs of the project by specific budget and cost categories.
- 4. Completed and signed Budget Information Forms (SF-424a) to provide information about the amount of funding you are requesting from MEPI ("Federal") and any funding that your organization is providing to the project ("Non-Federal" or "cost-sharing").
- 5. A statement of work or synopsis of the project, including a concise breakdown of the project's objectives, activities, and expected results.
- 6. A brief statement on how the project is innovative, sustainable, and will have a demonstrated impact.
- 7. A copy of the organization registration document (JORT).
- All documents are in English and all costs are in U.S. dollars. If an original document within the application is in another language, an English translation must be provided (please note: the Department of State, as indicated in 2 CFR 200.111, requires that English is the official language

of all award documents. If any documents are provided in both English and a foreign language, the English language version is the controlling version).

- The U.S Embassy retains the right to ask for additional documents not included in this NOFO.

D.3 Grants.gov

Grants.gov is a single portal for applicants to find and apply to U.S. government funding opportunities. Creating an account with this system is a five-step process: 1) obtain a DUNS number; 2) create an account with the System for Award Management; 3) create a profile, including username and password; 4) obtain Authorized Organization Representative (AOR) authorization; and 5) track AOR status. This process can take 10 business days or longer, even if all the steps are completed in a timely manner. **To create an account, go to www.grants.gov and click on the “Register” link, located at the top, right-hand side of the page.**

A. SUBMISSION DATES AND TIMES

Applications must be time stamped before **23:59:59** Tunis time on **February 29th 2016**. **There will be no grace period, and any application not received by the application deadline will not advance to the Technical Review stage.**

Applicants are encouraged to submit an application far enough in advance of the deadline so it can alert MEPI Tunis (MEPITunis@state.gov) of any technical difficulties and allow sufficient time to resolve difficulties before the deadline. Although MEPI Tunis will work with applicants to resolve technical issues, it is not in a position to grant exceptions to the submission requirements outlined in this announcement.

Questions: Please direct questions to MEPITunis@state.gov

D.4 Unique Entity Identifier and System for Award Management Registration

Applicants are required to obtain a Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) number to submit an application for a MEPI Local Grant. An active System for Award Management (SAM) registration is mandatory to receive an award. Under the law, it is mandatory to obtain a UEI number and register in SAM.

- **Unique Entity Identifier:** The Unique Entity Identifier (UEI), formerly referred to as a DUNS number, is one of the data elements mandated by Public Law 109-282, the Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act (FFATA), for all Federal awards.
- **System for Award Management Registration:** The System for Award Management, formerly managed by the Central Contractor Registration (CCR), is a U.S.-government wide registry for vendors doing business with the U.S. federal government and requires annual renewal. **To register, please follow the steps below:**
 1. Go to <http://www.sam.gov>
 2. Select Create User Account, and then select Create an Account again on the left-hand side of the screen under Individual Account Details. Organizations must have a The Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) number to begin the registration process.

3. Complete and submit the online registration form. If the applying organization already has the necessary information on hand (see the SAM User Guide), the online registration form takes approximately one hour to complete, depending upon the size and complexity of the applying entity. Because of the different steps in the process, it can take anywhere from three to fourteen days to register with the system.

D.5 NATO COMMERCIAL AND GOVERNMENT ENTITY (NCAGE) CODE

CAGE codes for entities located outside the United States and its territories are called NATO Commercial and Government Entity (NCAGE) codes. NCAGE codes are assigned internationally as part of the NATO Codification System (NCS), and are required for all foreign entities to create an account in SAM.gov. The Code is a five-character ID number, and can take, at a minimum, 4-5 business days to create. **To register, please follow the steps below:**

1. Web browser should be Internet Explorer
2. Foreign registrants must log into: [CAGE Code Request](https://eportal.nspa.nato.int/AC135Public/scage/CageList.aspx) at <https://eportal.nspa.nato.int/AC135Public/scage/CageList.aspx>
3. Once in the NATO Codification Tools website, scroll to the right-hand corner and click the “**Magnifying Glass**.” The magnifying glass will open a new page.
4. Scroll down the right-hand side until you see “**Request New**,” click on this link and it will take you to the next page to apply for an NCAGE Code Number.
5. When asked if the entity to be registered is a supranational organization, please click “No” if you are not part of a member state. Member states transcend national boundaries or interest to share in the decision-making across national boundaries which vote on issues pertaining to the wider group such as the European Union (EU) and the World Trade Organization (WTO). NATO nations Points of Contacts website: <http://www.nato.int/structur/AC/135/main/links/contacts.htm>
6. Prior to registering in SAM.gov, validate the newly assigned NCAGE Code via the Business Identification Number Cross- Reference System (BINCS) at https://www.dlis.dla.mil/bincs/begin_search.aspx. If the assigned NCAGE is not listed in BINCS, the recipient should call 269-961-4623 or send a message to NCAGE@NSPA.NATO.INT

D.6 Funding restrictions:

U.S. Department of State awards are subject to the terms and conditions, cost principles and other considerations, described in the website: mepi.seiservices.com/LocalGrants.

Projects are usually funded for one year, but the project and budget periods can be a minimum of three months. MEPI can award a grantee additional funding and extend the period of performance beyond the initial project and budget period, on a noncompetitive basis, subject to availability of funds, satisfactory progress, and a determination that continued funding would be in the best interest of the U.S. Department of State.

MEPI reserves the right to award less or more than the amounts described above in the absence of worthy applications or under such other circumstances as MEPI may deem to be in the best interest of the U.S. Government.

Embassy Tunis will not consider applications that reflect any type of support for any member, affiliate, or representative of a designated terrorist organization. No entity listed on the Excluded Parties List System in SAM is eligible for any assistance or can participate in any activities in accordance with the OMB guidelines at 2 CFR 180 that implement Executive Orders 12549 (3 CFR Part 1986 Comp., p. 189) and 12689 (3 CFR Part 1989 Comp., p. 235).

E. APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION

E.1 Criteria

A MEPI review panel will assess proposals against the following criteria:

Quality of Project Idea

Applications should be responsive to the NOFO, appropriate in the Tunisian context, and should exhibit originality, substance, precision, and relevance to Embassy Tunis assistance priorities of supporting the Tunisian economy and Democracy. Embassy Tunis prioritizes innovative and creative approaches rather than projects that simply duplicate or add to efforts by other entities. This does not exclude projects that clearly build off existing successful projects in a new and innovative way from consideration. In governorates where similar activities are already taking place, an explanation should be provided as to how new activities will not duplicate or merely add to existing activities and how these efforts will be coordinated.

Project Planning/Ability to Achieve Objectives

A strong application will include a clear articulation of how the proposed project activities contribute to the overall project objectives, and each activity will be clearly developed and detailed. A comprehensive work plan should demonstrate substantive undertakings and the logistical capacity of the organization. Objectives should be ambitious, yet measurable results-focused and achievable in a reasonable time frame. A complete application must include a logic model to demonstrate how the project will have an impact on its proposed objectives. If applicable, applications should identify target areas for activities, target participant groups or selection criteria for participants, and the specific roles of subawardees, among other pertinent details.

Institution's Record and Capacity

Embassy Tunis will consider the past performance of prior recipients and the demonstrated potential of new applicants. Applications should demonstrate an institutional record of successful implementation of previous projects, including responsible fiscal management and full compliance with all reporting requirements for past grants.

Cost Effectiveness

Embassy Tunis strongly encourages applicants to clearly demonstrate project cost-effectiveness in their application, including examples of leveraging institutional and other resources. Budgets, however, should have low and/or reasonable overhead and administration costs and applicants should provide clear explanations and justifications for these costs in relation to the work involved. All budget items should be clearly explained and justified to demonstrate its necessity, appropriateness, and its link to the project objectives.

Please note: If cost-share is included in the budget then the recipient must maintain written records to support all allowable costs that are claimed as its contribution to cost-share, as well as costs to be paid by the Federal government. Such records are subject to audit. In the event the recipient does not meet the minimum amount of cost-sharing as stipulated in the recipient's budget, Embassy Tunis contribution may be reduced in proportion to the recipient's contribution.

Multiplier Effect/Sustainability

Applications should clearly delineate how elements of the project will have a multiplier effect and be sustainable beyond the life of the grant. A good multiplier effect will have an impact beyond the direct beneficiaries of the grant (e.g. participants trained under a grant go on to train other people, workshop participants use skills from a workshop to enhance a national level election that affects the entire populace). A strong sustainability plan may include demonstrating continuing impact beyond the life of a project or garnering other donor support after MEPI funding ceases.

E.2 Review and Selection Process

Embassy Tunis strives to ensure each application receives a balanced evaluation by a MEPI Review Panel. All applications for a given solicitation are then reviewed against the same five criteria, which includes quality of project idea, project planning/ability to achieve objectives, institution's record and capacity, cost effectiveness, and multiplier effect/sustainability.

MEPI Review Panels may provide conditions and recommendations on applications to enhance the proposed project, which must be addressed by the applicant before further consideration of the award. To ensure effective use of MEPI funds, conditions or recommendations may include requests to increase, decrease, clarify, and/or justify costs and project activities.

Notification: Applicants will be informed of their status starting **April 11, 2016**.

Background Information about MEPI:

MEPI offers assistance, training, and support to groups and individuals striving to bring change to the Middle East and North Africa. MEPI supports projects, partnering with civil society organizations, community leaders, youth and women activists, private sector groups, and others to advance their efforts to create positive change in their societies. For more information about MEPI programs visit www.mepi.state.gov.

F. AWARD NOTICES

Applicants who do not advance to the Technical Review stage will be notified 30 business days after the closing of the announcement. The authorized representative and program point of contact listed on the SF-424 will receive the notification via email. If an applicant does not receive such a notification, their submission was put forward for review.

Notification: Applicants will be informed of their status starting **April 11, 2016**.

Final awards cannot be made until funds have been appropriated by Congress, allocated and committed through internal Bureau procedures. Successful applicants will receive a Federal

Assistance Award (FAA) from the Bureau's Grants Office. The FAA and the original proposal with subsequent modifications (if applicable) shall be the only binding authorizing document between the recipient and the U.S. Government. The FAA will be signed by an authorized Grants Officer, and transmitted to the recipient's responsible officer identified in the application. **MEPI reserves the right to award funding to applicants under this announcement for a period of up to two years after the announcement's close date.**

Unsuccessful applicants will receive notification of the results of the application review from the MEPI program office coordinating this competition.

F.1 REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

Reporting is critical to effective program management and oversight. Reports are required as a means of evaluating the recipient's progress and utilization of resources. They are divided between a performance progress report and a financial status report.

Recipients will, at a minimum, be required to submit Quarterly Progress Reports and a Quarterly Financial Report. Progress Reports will compare actual to planned performance and indicate the progress made in accomplishing each assistance award tasks/goals noted in the grant agreement and will contain analysis and summary of findings, both quantitative and qualitative, for key indicators. Financial Reports provide a means of monitoring expenditures and comparing costs incurred with progress.

Recipients must report ***immediately*** when a program faces unplanned delays in implementation, fails to meet program targets or milestones, or costs increase. Any changes or revisions to the approved budget require prior approval from the NEA/AC Grants Officer.

F.2 BRANDING AND MARKING REQUIREMENTS FOR GRANTEES

Grantees awarded under this announcement will be required to mark all materials produced under the award with the standard U.S. flag in a size and prominence equal to (or greater than) any other logo or identity. Materials are defined as but not limited to: training materials, materials for recipients, or materials to communicate or promote with foreign audiences a program, event, project, or some other activity under this award, including but not limited to invitations to events, press materials, event backdrops, podium signs, etc. In addition, sub-recipients or sub-awardees are subject to the marking requirements and the grantee shall include a provision in the sub-recipient or sub-awardee's agreement indicating that the standard, rectangular U.S. flag is a requirement. Exceptions to this requirement can be discussed with MEPI when negotiating an award.

F.3 UEI NUMBER AND SAM REQUIREMENT FOR SUB-AWARDEES

All sub-awardees who will receive funds of \$25,000 or more are required to have a Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) and maintain an active SAM.gov account with current information. For information on obtaining a UEI number and creating an account with SAM.gov please see [D.4](#). **Proposed sub-awardees are not required to have a DUNS number and SAM account prior to the submission of an application.**

F.4 SUB-AWARDEE REPORTING REQUIREMENT

Grantees awarded under this announcement will be required to report all sub-awardees receiving funds of \$25,000 or more to <http://www.fsrs.gov>. More information about this requirement can be found at this site.

G. AGENCY CONTACTS

For questions regarding this funding opportunity including: completing an application, financial and grants management issues, or technical matters, contact:

MEPITunis@state.gov

216-71-107-323

216-71-107-003

All questions must be submitted in writing to MEPITunis@state.gov by February 15th, 2016 at 5 pm. MEPI Tunis will create a document of the submitted questions along with the answers and post it on our website and Grants.gov. Questions submitted after the deadline will not be addressed.

For questions regarding creating an account with or using Grants.gov to submit an application, contact the Grants.gov Contact Center. The Contact Center is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, excluding Federal holidays.

[Grants.gov Contact Center](#)

(800) 518-4726

support@Grants.gov

H. DISCLAIMER

The terms and conditions published in this NOFO are binding and may not be modified by any Embassy representative. Explanatory information provided by the Bureau that contradicts published language will not be binding. Issuance of the NOFO does not constitute an award commitment on the part of the Government. The Bureau reserves the right to reduce, revise, or increase proposal budgets in accordance with the needs of the program and the availability of funds. Awards made will be subject to periodic reporting and evaluation requirements listed in this NOFO